

A
PLAIN and PRACTICAL
EXPOSITION
OF THE
Creed and Decalogue.

Done in *English*

By *ERASMUS*,

For the USE of

Queen ANNE BOLEIN.

And printed with the Royal Licence of King
HENRY the VIIIth, *Anno Dom. 1533.*

The SECOND EDITION.

With a PREFACE by Mr. HIGGS.

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PLATE 10

EXPOSÉ

CHRONOLOGICAL

TABLE

OF THE

PROGRESS OF THE

SCIENCE

OF THE

ARTS

AND

MANUFACTURES



THE
P R E F A C E

OF THE

EDITOR of *this Edition.*

I.



T WAS PROMISED in the Proposal for Reprinting this Work, that it should be introduced with two Chapters: *The one* to be an Account of the Book; *the other* the History of Religion.

2. THE BOOK itself has been printed off some Years, and the First Chapter of this *Preface* very easily done. But the Second being much more difficult than was at first apprehended, has hitherto detained the Books from the Subscribers; for

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which the Editor humbly begs their Pardon.

THE HISTORY OF RELIGION should not be so rashly undertaken. It is a Work to which the greatest Masters in Theology are not equal.

The Thing is of eternal Duration; Religion was decreed before the Creation of the World, and must continue to Ages everlasting. It is the Method by which every Man is to answer the End of his Being, and to attain the Happiness for which he was created, and to which therefore all the most consummate Wisdom of this World must be subordinate, or charged with Folly. It is such a Method of conducting our selves as is consistent with the Frame of human Nature; it gives us one Choice, and makes Provision for a second, consistent with infinite Justice, and infinite Mercy, infinite Wisdom, and infinite Power. The first Choice was given to *Adam* in the State of Innocence, when his Understanding was clear, and his Affections perfectly unbiassed. He chose wrong, as it was foreseen he would, and then he had leave to chuse again according to a Provision

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Provision made for him before he was created. Life and Death are now again before us. *The Arguments for chusing Life should be therefore the Introduction; and the Methods of pursuing that Choice,* THE HISTORY OF RELIGION.

RELIGION, in the proper Sense of the Word, is *our Duty to God*, and pre-supposes our Knowledge of him, so far as we are capable, or as he has revealed himself. Reason tells us no Creature can represent him, because he is Infinite in all Respects. Revelation tells us he is One in Three, and Three in One. Three Persons in One Substance, and One Substance in Three Persons. But then the common Use of those Terms Substance and Person, make them hardly intelligible when applied to God, who is the Infinite Eternal Substance, yet not Material, and subsists in three Persons without Dividing or Confusion. He is Father unbegotten, and Son only begotten, and Holy Ghost proceeding, and yet without Superiority or Subordination, without being before or after. And yet each of these Persons has his proper Office in the

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Business of Religion; and can then the History of it be easy?

THERE are indeed Distinctions in human Nature which may some way shadow out this Personality in God; but they are but a Shadow, and Shadows very faint ones.

Adam is distinct from all others in humane Nature in this respect, that he was not begotten or proceeding from human Nature. Eve was distinguished in this, that she proceeded from Adam, in a manner peculiar to her self. The Distinction of Seth was in this, that he was begotten with accidental Circumstances relating to his Birth, distinct from all others, which Circumstantiating Relations are now the only Distinction. Rightly therefore it is said that there are Three Personal Proprieties, Three Foundations of Personality in Humane Nature, *Unbegotten, Begotten, and Proceeding*. But then these divide the Substance, and give Priority, which Division and Subordination are incompatible with the Substance of God.

And as it is rightly said that the Face, the Mien, the Gesture, or any

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any Thing else which distinguishes one Man from another, may be called *the Person*, yet still the Division and Subordination in these Distinctions make the Term not applicable to God, without an Explanation to correct the Idea.

But indeed since the Term is appropriated to Intelligences or Rational Beings, we rightly say every Rational Being that has in it these Distinctions is a personal Being, and subsists in as many Persons as it hath such Distinctions. This we easily understand in human Nature, because we ourselves are Part of it, and can distinguish one Man from another by his Face or Mein, or the Account of his coming into humane Nature, or even by his Character therein. And therefore if any of those be designed by the Terms *Paam*, *Peh*, or *Panim*, *Hypostasis*, *Prosopon*, or *Character*, *Facies* or *Persona*, or *Person*, we make no Difficulty at all, because we know the full Extent of the Word, and even of the Substance it self thus subsisting; and have distinct Ideas of the Substance, and of the Subsistence.

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Tho' this be true, yet when we come to hear any of those Terms spoken of the *Incomprehensible* and Infinite, and therefore Indivisible Substance of God; a Substance of which it is out of the Capacity of our Intellectual Faculties to frame any Idea: there can be no Idea of the Subsistence or Personality of that Substance; all that can be said is, there may be a negative Distinction in the Substance; so that the Father is not the Son, or the Holy Ghost, and *vice versa*; but *the Inquiry what that Distinction is, will be the happy Employment of the Spirits of Just Men made Perfect.*

HERE *then is the first and great Difficulty* of the Attempt to make my self *speak intelligibly.*

THEN that History must inform you, that * the Infinite Substance subsisting from all Eternity in the Persons of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, decreed to create Mankind capable of everlasting Happiness; which requires him to be a Free Agent, and consequently liable to chuse amiss, and to be miserable for ever.

* The erroneous Choice was foreseen,
and

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and Provision made to give him a second Option for his Life. * In this Transaction the Three Persons of the most Holy Trinity had their joint and separate Parts, without Confusion of the Person or dividing the Substance. * To give us that second Option, one of these Persons distinct from the other two, became very Man, and made Satisfaction in our stead to Infinite Justice; * And another of them now contends with you and me, and all Mankind in our Consciences, to induce us to chuse Life eternal. * This Spirit of God, usually called the Holy Ghost, who thus strives severally with all the Myriads of Men at one and the same time, is one undivided Spirit. * And that Infinite Substance which subsists in the Father, and in the Son, and in the Holy Ghost, is also one undivided Substance: * Incarnate in the Person of the Son distinct from the Father and Holy Ghost. * And now pleading your Cause and mine with each of us in our several Consciences distinct from the Father and the Son: Distinct in personal Propriety, and Office and Character thereto annexed; but one and undivided as to the

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the Infinite Substance of which those Distinctions are predicated in the Holy Bible. But now to express this intelligibly is the Difficulty.

TRUE INDEED it is *the Original Language of the Bible is purely Theological, and adapted to this sort of Knowledge*; but the Translation of it into *Greek*, I mean as to the Theological Terms, is very defective.

THE FIRST RELIGION was given to *Adam* in Paradise. The Object of his Devotion was his Creator; the Stile of this Creator is in Hebrew *Elohim*, a Word most certainly of the Plural Number, and significative of Three at least, for they express Two by the Dual Number; and is accordingly explained by three; *Jehovah*, and the Word, or *Logos*, and the *Holy Ghost*. And yet this *Hebrew* Name thus evidently signifying Three, is rendered in the *Greek* by Θεός, God, a Word of the singular Number, and that also is retained in the New Testament; and thence the Great Masters of secular Wisdom have taken upon themselves to say the Term *God* in Scripture, always signifies One Person only. Nay, tho' the same Holy Ghost asserts his own Proceeding distinct from

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from the Generation of the *Logos*, and that he was from Eternity with Him; and tho' the *Logos* affirms his own eternal Generation; and each of these are the supream self-existent Being, and termed *Jehovah*, and there is but one *Jehovah*; so that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are undeniably understood in the Term *God*; yet the plural Number being not retained in the *Greek* Version of the Old Testament, or in the Theological Terms of the New, those that go no farther are liable to Error; and unless they compare Text with Text, and judge every Part by the whole, may be mislead by any Body whose Judgment in other parts of Literature may recommend them to the Vulgar.

The Old Testament was translated into *Greek* above two Centuries before the Incarnation of our Blessed Lord. The apparent moving Cause was the Curiosity of a *Pagan* King of *Egypt*. But there seems to have been something far more noble in the View of Infinite Wisdom when this thing was done. For as that Person of the Holy Trinity who was to satisfy infinite Justice for us could

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could not do it as the Law stood, but by being real Man, there was a Necessity of his having some Characteristics to distinguish him from other Men; which, whoever will be at the Pains to consider will agree, could be only in the Circumstances of his Birth, Life, and Manner of his Death, and some peculiar Incidents thereto belonging, which no other Man could pretend to. And these also must have been foretold before his coming long enough, to shew they were not contrived on purpose, and to serve a Turn. And it appears from the Fact, that this was the noble Intention of the Version of those Prophecies into *Greek*. The *Hebrew* Language had been preserved a living Language from the Creation to the *Babylonian* Captivity, but then began to be corrupted with the *Chaldee*. However, the Knowledge of it was kept up among the *Jews* by the continual use of it in the Temple, and in the Synagogues, and in the private Devotions of the Families of the Pious. Infomuch, that *St. Matthew* makes use of the Signification of the Name *Jesus* in *Hebrew*, to prove the Reality of his being the Christ.

Jesus

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Jesus is the *Hellenist* Pronunciation of the *Hebrew* *Joshuah*, which signifies *Saviour*, and Christ is for that Reason called *Jesus*, because he saves his People from their Sins.

Notwithstanding this Learning that continued among the pious, there was a very great Alteration in the Language of the People, and the *Hebrew* was so far from being universally known, that it was a Secret to all, save those who studied it, for the sake of their Religion; and consequently went no further than the Jurisdiction of the High Priests, the Sons of *Aaron*, did extend.

On the other hand, the Conquests of *Alexander Magnus* had extended the *Grecian* Language thro' the greatest part of the East; and the Prudence of the *Roman* People had made them chose it for the sake of the Learning, not otherwise to be had. So that at that time the Language was known in all the *Roman* Empire and much farther. And therefore there does not seem to have been any Method more certain for the Manifestation of that Man who also is God our Saviour, than such prophetic Designations, and the putting

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ting them into Greek the then Universal Language.

THOSE PROPHECIES *in the Original Hebrew, were intermix'd with the most exact Theology the World hath ever been blessed with the Knowledge of.* Theology is the Account of the Godhead, his Nature, Attributes and Subsistence, which cannot certainly be known but by the Revelation of God himself. For tho' a Man of Enquiry and Penetration may argue from the Cause to the Effect, and from the Perfections of the latter to those of the former, and thereby discover the Being, the Nature, the Attributes, and even the three Subsistences or Personalities of the Godhead : Yet this at best is but darkly done, while Revelation shows them as it were Face to Face. And since those Things are prior to All-created Nature, and are the proper Objects of human Inquiry, it is most Rational to conclude *Adam in Paradise had his first Conversation with his Creator upon this Subject ;* and consequently, that the Language he then spoke, must have been naturally adapted to the Subject of Theo-

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Theology, and when applied to any created Being, must have conveyed defective Ideas.

BUT NOW we are forced to begin at the wrong End, and take defective Words to convey to us Ideas of the absolute perfect Being. And those Words all the Light the present Versions of the Bible can give us. And yet the History of Religion must be founded upon the Bible.

RELIGION may be stiled the Laws of the Kingdom of God, and that Kingdom may be stiled THE OECONOMY, and that Oeconomy may be divided into three general Heads. One before the Fall of Adam, another since, and the third to commence at the Resurrection. The second of those Oeconomies may be again subdivided into three Administrations first from the Fall of Adam to Moses, thence to our Lord's Incarnation, thence to the Day of Judgment or Restitution of all Things.

IN THESE OECONOMIES, the Titles of God in the Original express the several Manners of his Government. IN THE FIRST he governs in three Persons without a Mediator, and calls himself *thy* Creators, *thy* Makers,

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Makers, who stretched out the Heavens alone, and spread abroad the Earth by himself, and is stiled Bereshith, Elohim, and Jehovah, which Terms properly signify the Trinity of Persons in the Unity of Substance.

IN THE SECOND OECONOMY and *first* ADMINISTRATION, he appeared and spoke to the Patriarchs in two *Shechinahs*, and in the inferior Character of Mediator sustained by the two Persons of the Son and Holy Ghost: and accordingly has the Titles of *El shaddai* and *Adonai*, signifying the two Persons, and the Unity of the Substance, and *Malach* signifying the Mediatorial Character.

IN THE SECOND ADMINISTRATION of that Oeconomy, he is said to resume the Government of *Israel* into the *Supream* Character, continuing therewith the Mediatorial Character: and there he is stiled *Jehovah Malach*; and *El Ærech Aphaim* and *Elohim Sabaoth Elohi Israel*. Which denote the supream and subordinate Characters in the Trinity and Mediator, and Unity of Nature in both. And when for the sake of *Israel* an extraordinary Sentence

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Sentence was passed upon *Nebuchadnezzar*, it is said to have been the Decree of *Erim* on the Petition of *Kadoshim*, keeping still the same Significancy of Expression, denoting *three Persons in One Substance, and two Characters in two of the Persons.*

IN THE LAST Administration, where the Government of the Nations is taken from the Angels, and under which the Church is at this time, he is glorified as *God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; by and with the Son, in Unity of the Holy Ghost.* According to the Prophet, *In that Day Jehovah shall be as King over all the Earth. In that Day there shall be (to all Men) one Jehovah, whose Power is One.* And we are now baptized by his express Command *in the [one] Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.* And we have access *by the Son in one Spirit, to this God Almighty who is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

NOW had the Version been as *significative and express as the Original*, it would have been very easy to write *the History of Religion*; but, as Things are situated, this could not be expected. And therefore the Difficulty of the Task, with-

B

out

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out taking any Notice of the many Avocations with which I have been perpetually diverted, will, I hope, be my Excuse, for the long Delay in delivering to the Subscribers their Books.



CHAP.

CHAP. I.

An Account of the following Book.

§. I. **E**RASMUS wrote it in *English*.

§. II. *The Contents.*

§. III. *Some Remarks made by the Editor.*

§. I. SIR THOMAS BOLEIN, Father of QUEEN ANNE BOLEIN, Mother of QUEEN ELIZABETH, put ERASMUS upon writing this Exposition of the Creed and Decalogue. And KING HENRY THE EIGHTH was pleased to give it HIS ROYAL LICENCE some Years before any other Work tending to advance the Reformation, could obtain the like Privilege.

THAT ERASMUS wrote it not only in *Latin*, but in the *English*, here published, is concluded from these Considerations.

1. The *Intent* could not have been so fully answered, if any Hand had translated it into *English*.

Account of the Book. Ch. I.

ERASMUS's Paraphrases upon the New Testament, did exceedingly advance the Reformation then in hand. But the Adversaries, who stick at nothing, had in some Measure stopped their Success, by alledging they were not faithfully rendered. This few of the Nobility, and perhaps not many of the Commons, at that Day could contradict from *their own Knowledge*; and therefore it was necessary this Piece should be done in *English* by *Erasmus* himself, to obviate the Objections made against the Version of his Works done by others.

2. *The English* is not that which the Polite Writers then used, but such as a *Foreigner* and a *Native of the Low Countries*, not well acquainted with our Language, would speak and write.

Therefore since he wrote a Copy in *Latin*, and printed it at the same time in a Portable Volume; It cannot be supposed *such sort of English* would have been received from any Translator whatever, or indeed that any one no better skilled in his own Language, would attempt to set up for an Interpreter at the Court of King *Henry* the Eighth, to have thereby assisted the Protestant Interest, then surrounded with Multitudes of Enemies.

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§. II. The Contents of Erasmus's Exposition.

(The Letter A signifies the first Side of the Folio, and B the second.)

ERASMUS's Letter to Sir Thomas Bolein then Earl of Wiltshire and Ormond, in answer to his Lordship's Request for composing this Work. Folio 1

Nore, Erasmus therein names St. Cyprian for the Author of an Exposition of the Creed, found amongst his undoubted Works, which has been since restored to the true Author, Ruffinus of Aquilea.

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SECTION III.

REMARKS *by the Editor of
this Second Edition.*

THE END of Reading is either for *Diversion* or *Edification*. *Diversion*, as the Word declares, is turning us from one Business to another. All wise Men find their secular Affairs are Diversions, so far as they are Vocations from their preparing themselves for that eternal Happiness to which we are created, and for which we have been redeemed. And as to that Effect of *Diversion*, which is generally stiled *Recreation*, or fitting the Mind for fresh pursuing the Business with which it has been fatigued, this is no more than bending the Application another way. The laborious part of *Mechanicks* take as much Pains at their Rustick Games as at their Work, and yet will tell you they are recreated thereby.

That therefore this Book may be read with Pleasure; and be a sort of *Recreation* both to them whose secular Affairs weary their Spirits, and to them whose Happiness it is to be employed in Theological Studies, these few Remarks are added;

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added ; in which, if the small Extent of my Reading has not mislead me, there are some Things not to be readily found in other Books of this Nature, and consequently such as will recreate the Reader, while his Edification is sincerely intended.

REMARK, No. I.

Some Theological Terms necessary to be explained.

I. *Shechinah.*

II. *Substance.*

III. *Person.*

IV. *Almighty and Father Almighty.*

The Theological Terms Substance, Person, and Almighty in the Clause Father Almighty, have been variously understood, and the Word Shechinah has for many Ages lain buried in the Ruins of the Temple. Hence many Errors have proceeded ; and therefore it will be necessary to settle the Meaning of those Words, before we can proceed with any Hopes of giving Satisfaction to the Reader.

§. I. *Of the Term Shechinah.*

Those Pillars of a Cloud and Fire, in which God was pleased to appear when he gave the Law to Moses, are called by the antient Hebrews the Shechinah ;
which

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which also is the proper Denomination of any other spiritual or corporeal Substance which God hath, doth, or shall inhabit.

SHECHINAH properly signifies *a*

(a) From *Tabernacle, or Habitation*, (a) whence the *Shacan* Greek *Σκηνή* *Schene*, the usual Version of *habituavit* is the Hebrew Word for the *Tabernacle* (b) the Chaldee where God dwelt between the *Cherubim* (c), *Shecinah* and and to which the New Testament seems *Shecintah. See* to allude, when it says, the *Tabernacle of* *Castelli Lexi-* *God is with Men*, (d) and the *Word was* *con and Bux-* *made Flesh, and dwelt with us* (e); or, as *torf's Rabbinic* *it may be render'd, Tabernacled in our* *Lexicon in* *voce.*

(b) *Græci Nature.*

ita interpre-

tati videntur ut non solum nomen Hebraicum exponerent—sed etiam—ut nominis Græci originem ab Hebraico deducendam quasi digito monstrarent. Fuller's Miscel. IV. 5. (c) Isaiah xxxvii. 16. (d) Rev. xxi. 3. (e) John i. 14.

The New Testament uses the same Greek Word, to signify the humane Body in which the Rational Soul hath its Habitation; (f) and which therefore may be said to be the *Shechinah* of the Soul.

(f) 2 Cor.
v. 1, 4.

The utmost Caution must be used in translating the Word from this Common to the Theological Use. For the *Tabernacle* of the humane Body contains the Soul; and the *Tabernacle* of *Shilo* contained the Ark on which the *Shecinah* sat; but the *Shecinah* of God did not contain the infinite God. It only makes his Presence more manifest to us while it self is
compre-

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comprehended in that Infinite Being which is manifested by it. *The just Idea therefore to be conveyed to us by this Word Shechinah, when used as a Theological Term, is only this, that it signifies the Manifestation of the Presence of God.*

The antient Hebrew Divines use the Term. They thereby express the visible Presence of God; not that which the Prophets have sometime seen in Extasies and Visions, but that which appeared to Men in the full Exercise of their Bodily as well as Intellectual Faculties. The Pillars of a Cloud and of Fire, were the Manifestations of the Presence of God to all the People of Israel in the Wilderness. He guarded them thereby, and spoke to them from thence (g). Now these are stiled by the Targum of Onkelos the Shechinah (h). And the same visible Presence of God, when promised to be continued to Israel in the Tabernacle in the Land of Canaan, is called the Shechinah by Jonathan's Targum (i), which, in other Places continues to use it; and the same Word is also used by the Targum of Josephus's Cæcus (k), and even by the Talmud it self (l).

(g) Exod. xxxiii. 9, 10.
Pf. xcix. 7.
(h) Exod. xxxiii. 15, 16.

(i) Exod. xxv. 5.

(k) 2 Chron. vii. 1, 2.

(l) See Buxtorf's Lexic. Rabin. in Voce Shechinah.

There were four *Shechinahs*: God the Son hath had two, and the Holy Ghost as many: One of each was in the first Oeconomy or Government of the World before the Fall of Adam, the other since. And therefore may be called the former and latter *Shechinahs*.

The

(m) Vide
Notes at the
End of this
Section,
No. 1.

(n) Vide
Note, No. 2.

(o) Vide
Note, No. 3.

(p) See
Note 1. at
the End of
this Section.

The former *Shechinah's* were created at the same time with the *Prima Materia*, or Elements of this visible World; (m) that of the Son was a Cloud or Body of Water, and that of the Holy Ghost was a Body of Fire they were both in human Shape (n).

The latter *Shechinah's* are very different; that of the Son is the very humane Nature; and that of the Holy Ghost is the Spirit or Soul of every Man; (o) and his Energy therein is commonly called the Conscience.

The two former of these are peculiarly adapted to the *first Oeconomy* or State of Innocence. When God in the most holy Trinity governed the World without any Mediator of Redemption, and the Will of Man being perfectly free, needed no internal Assistance to counterballance the Depravity now inherent in us. And therefore tho' the Scripture speaks only of the Formation of a *Shechinah* in the beginning of the Creation, before the Light (p), yet we may safely conclude the same Appearance which *Abraham*, and *Job*, and *David*, and *Isaiah*, and *Ezekiel* saw, as *Balaam*, with their Eyes open, and which the whole Nation of *Israel* had a Glimpse of at the Delivery of the Law, was the same *Shechinah* which conversed with *Adam* in Paradise, and was created before the Light.

The